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1825. L 8.

J. Mitford. [March. 1814.]
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"Specimens of Sr P. Sidneys sacred Poetry (Psalms) procured from Cambridge by Dr Zouch."
see Wrenghams Life of Zouch. V. ii. p. 446.

See specimens of the double Acrostic from Alex. Neville's Lacrymae Acad. Cant: tumulo nobiliss: Equit: D. Philippi Sidnaei sacratae. a very rare tract. see Bilne's Anecd. 1. 136.

See Memoir of Sir P. Sydney, in Br. Bibliogr: vol. ii. p. 81.

See Davison's Poetical Rhapsodie. vol. 1. p. LXIV. LXXXVI. & p. 29.

See Censura Literaria. vol. VII. p. 14. Retrosp. Rev. vol. X. p. 43.

"In reading Amadis de Greece, I have found Spenser's Mask of Cupid, Sr P. Sidney's Zelmane, and Shakspeare's Florizel. the latter by name, going to court a Shepherddess who proves of course a Princess at last. Was ever any single work honored with such imitators?"
Southy. (Sr Eg. Brydges Autob.
Vol. ii. p. 261.

See Retrosp. Revw. vol ii. p. 5.

Edd. of Def. of Poesy. 1595 4to. 1598. 1787. ed. by Dr Warton. 1810 by Ld Thurlow. see Wm Gray's ed. of Misc: Works, who does not mention this edition. written about 1581.

on Sir P. Sidney. see Southey's C. Rem book.
T. iv. p. 321.

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SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

THE

DEFENSE

OF

POESY.

BY

Sir *PHILIP SIDNEY*, Kt.

GLASGOW:

Printed by R. URIE, MDCCLII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE DEFENSE OF POESY.

WHEN the right virtuous *E. W.* and I were at the emperor's court together, we gave ourſelves to learn horſemanſhip of *Gio. Pietro Pugliano*, one that, with great commendation, had the place of an * eſquire in his ſtable: and he, according to the fertileneſs of the *Italian* wit, did not only afford us the demonſtration of his practice, but ſought to inrich our minds with the contemplation therein, which he thought moſt precious. But with none, I remember, mine ears

* Equerry.

were at any time more loaden, than when (either angred with ſlow payment, or moved with our learner-like admiration) he exerciſed his ſpeech in the praiſe of his faculty. He ſaid, Soldiers were the nobleſt eſtate of mankind, and horſemen the nobleſt of ſoldiers. He ſaid, They were the maſters of war, and ornaments of peace, ſpeedy goers, and ſtrong abiders, triumphers both in camps and courts: nay, to ſo unbelieved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred ſuch wonder to a prince, as to be a good horſeman: Skill of government was but a *Pedanteria* in compariſon. Then would he add certain praiſes, by telling what a peerleſs beaſt the horſe was, the only ſerviceable courtier, without flattery, the beaſt of moſt beauty, faithfulneſs, courage, and ſuch more, that if I had not been a piece of a *Logician* before I came to him, I think he would have perſuaded me to have wiſhed myſelf a horſe. But thus much, at leaſt, with his no few words, he drove into me, That ſelf-love is better than any gilding, to make that ſeem gorgeous where-

in ourſelves be parties. Wherein, if *Pugliano*'s ſtrong affection, and weak arguments, will not ſatisfy you, I will give you a nearer example of myſelf, who, I know not by what miſchance, in theſe my not old years and idleſt times, having ſlipped into the title of a poet, am provoked to ſay ſomething unto you in the defence of that my un-elected vocation; which if I handle with more good will, than good reaſons, bear with me, ſince the ſcholar is to be pardoned that followeth the ſteps of his maſter. And yet I muſt ſay, That as I have more juſt cauſe to make a * pitiful defenſe of poor Poetry, which, from almoſt the higheſt eſtimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughing-ſtock of children; ſo have I need to bring ſome more available proofs, ſince the former is by no man barred of his deſerved credit, whereas the ſilly latter hath had even the names of *Philoſophers* uſing to the defacing of it, with great danger of civil war among the muſes. And firſt, truly,

* Compaſſionate.

to all them that, profeſſing learning, inveigh againſt Poetry may juſtly be objected, That they go very near to ungratefulneſs, to ſeek to deface that, which, in the nobleſt nations and languages that are known, hath been the firſt light-giver to ignorance, and firſt nurſe, whoſe milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowleges. And will you play the hedg-hog, that being received into the den, drove out his hoſt? or rather the vipers, that with their birth kill their parents? Let learned *Greece*, in any of her manifold ſciences, be able to ſhew me one book before *Muſaeus*, *Homer*, and *Heſiod*, all three nothing elſe but poets. Nay, let any hiſtory be brought, that can ſay any writers were there before them, if they were not men of the ſame ſkill, as *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and ſome others, are named, who having been the firſt of that country that made pens deliverers of their knowlege to poſterity, may juſtly challenge to be called their Fathers in learning. For not only in time they had this priority (although in itſelf anti-

quity be venerable) but went before them, as cauſes to draw, with their charming ſweetneſs, the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowlege. So as *Amphion* was ſaid to move ſtones with his poetry to build *Thebes*, and *Orpheus* to be liſtened to by beaſts, indeed ſtony and beaſtly people: So among the *Romans* were *Livius*, *Andronicus*, and *Ennius*: So in the *Italian* language, the firſt that made it to aſpire to be a treaſure-houſe of ſcience, were the poets *Dante*, *Boccace*, and *Petrarch*: So in our *Engliſh*, were *Gower* and *Chaucer*; after whom, encouraged and delighted with their excellent foregoing, others have followed to beautify our mother-tongue, as well in the ſame kind, as other arts. This did ſo notably ſhew itſelf, that the *Philoſophers* of *Greece* durſt not a long time appear to the world, but under the maſk of Poets: So *Thales*, *Empedocles*, and *Parmenides*, ſang their natural Philoſophy in verſes: So did *Pythagoras* and *Phocyllides* their moral counſels: So did *Tyrteus* in war matters, and *Solon* in matters of policy; or

rather, they being Poets, did exerciſe their delightful vein in thoſe points of higheſt knowlege, which before them lay hidden to the world: For that wiſe *Solon* was directly a poet, it is manifeſt, having written, in verſe, the noble fable of the *Atlantic* iſland, which was continued by *Plato*. And, truly, even *Plato*, whoſoever well conſidereth, ſhall find, that in the body of his work, though the inſide and ſtrength were Philoſophy, the ſkin, as it were, and beauty, depended moſt of poetry. For all ſtands upon dialogues, wherein he feigns, many honeſt burgeſſes of *Athens* ſpeaking of ſuch matters, that if they had been ſet on the rack, they would never have confeſſed them: beſides his poetical deſcribing the circumſtances of their meetings, as the well-ordering of a banquet, the delicacy of a walk, and interlacing mere tales, as *Gyges*'s *Ring*, and others, which, who knows not to be flowers of poetry, did never walk into *Apollo*'s garden. And even *Hiſtoriographers*, although their lips ſound of things done, and verity be written in their foreheads,

heads, have been glad to borrow, both faſhion, and, perchance, weight, of the Poets: So *Herodotus* intituled the Books of his hiſtory by the names of *The nine Muſes*; and both he, and all the reſt that followed him, either ſtole or uſurped, of poetry, their paſſionate deſcribing of paſſions, the many particularities of battles which no man could affirm, or, if that be denied me, long orations, put in the mouths of great kings and captains, which, it is certain, they never pronounced. So that, truly, neither *Philoſopher*, nor *Hiſtoriographer*, could, at the firſt, have entered into the gates of popular judgment, if they had not taken a great diſport of Poetry, which in all nations, at this day, where learning flouriſheth not, is plain to be ſeen: in all which, they have ſome feeling of Poetry. In *Turkey*, beſides their law-giving divines, they have no other writers but poets. In our neighbour-country *Ireland*, where, truly, learning goes very bare, yet are their poets held in a devout reverence. Even among the moſt barbarous and ſimple *Indians*, where no writing is, yet have they their poets, who make, and ſing ſongs, which

they call *Arentos*, both of their anceſtors deeds, and praiſes of their gods. A ſufficient probability, that if ever learning come among them, it muſt be by having their hard, dull wits ſoftened and ſharpened with the ſweet delight of Poetry; for until they find a pleaſure in the exerciſe of the mind, great promiſes of much knowlege will little perſuade them that know not the fruits of knowlege. In *Wales*, the true remnant of the antient *Britons*, as there are good authorities to ſhew the long time they had poets, which they called *Bards*, ſo through all the conqueſts of *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*, ſome of whom did ſeek to ruin all memory of learning from among them, yet do their poets, even to this day, laſt; ſo as it is not more notable in the ſoon beginning, than in long continuing. But ſince the authors of moſt of our ſciences were the *Romans*, and, before them, the *Greeks*, let us, a little, ſtand upon their authorities, but even ſo far, as to ſee what names they have given unto this now ſcorned ſkill. Among the *Romans*, a poet was called *Vates*, which

is as much as a diviner, foreſeer, or prophet, as by his conjoined words *vaticinium*, and *vaticinari*, is manifeſt; ſo heavenly a title did that excellent people beſtow upon this heart-raviſhing knowlege! And ſo far were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought, in the changeable hitting upon any ſuch verſes, great fore-tokens of their following fortunes were placed. Whereupon grew the word of *Sortes Virgilianæ*, when, by ſudden opening *Virgil*'s book, they lighted upon ſome verſe, as it is reported by many, whereof the hiſtories of the *emperors* lives are full. As of *Albinus*, the governor of our iſland, who, in his childhood, met with this verſe,

Arma amens capio nec ſat rationis in armis;

And in his age performed it: Although it were a very vain and godleſs ſuperſtition; as alſo it was, to think ſpirits were commanded by ſuch verſes; whereupon this word *charms*, derived of *carmina*, cometh; ſo yet ſerveth it to ſhew the great reverence thoſe wits were held in, and altogether not

without ground, ſince both the oracles of *Delphos* and the *Sybils* prophecies were wholly delivered in verſes; for that ſame exquiſite obſerving of number and meaſure in the words, and that high-flying liberty of conceit proper to the poet, did ſeem to have ſome divine force in it. And may not I preſume a little farther, to ſhew the reaſonableneſs of this word *Vates*, and ſay, that the holy *David*'s Pſalms are a divine *Poem*? If I do, I ſhall not do it without the teſtimony of great learned men, both antient and modern. But even the name of Pſalms, will ſpeak for me; which, being interpreted, is nothing but Songs: then, that it is fully written in metre, as all learned *Hebricians* agree, although the rules be not yet fully found. Laſtly, and principally, his handling his prophecy, which is merely poetical. For what elſe is the awaking his muſical inſtruments; the often and free changing of perſons; his notable *proſopopœias*, when he maketh you, as it were, ſee God coming in his majeſty; his telling of the beaſts joyfulneſs, and hills leaping, but a heavenly Poeſy;

wherein, almoſt, he ſheweth himſelf a paſſionate lover of that unſpeakable and everlaſting beauty, to be ſeen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith? But, truly, now, having named him, I fear I ſeem to prophane that holy name, applying it to Poetry, which is, among us, thrown down to ſo ridiculous an eſtimation. But they that, with quiet judgments, will look a little deeper into it, ſhall find the end and working of it ſuch, as being rightly applied, deſerveth not to be ſcourged out of the church of God. But now let us ſee how the *Greeks* have named it, and how they deemed of it. The *Greeks* named him ποιητὴν, which name hath, as the moſt excellent, gone through other languages; it cometh of this word ποιεῖν, which is *to make:* wherein, I know not whether by luck or wiſdom, we *Engliſhmen* have met with the *Greeks* in calling him Maker! which name, how high and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were known by marking the ſcope of other ſciences, than by any partial allegation. There is no art delivered unto mankind, that hath not the

works of nature for his principal object, without which, they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth. So doth the *Astronomer* look upon the stars, and by that he seeth set down what order nature hath taken therein. So doth the *Geometrician* and *Arithmetician*, in their diverse sorts of quantities. So doth the *Musician*, in times, tell you, which by nature agree, which not. The *natural Philosopher* thereon hath his name, and the *moral Philosopher* standeth upon the natural virtues, vices, or passions of man: And follow nature, saith he, therein, and thou shalt not err. The *Lawyer* saith what men have determined. The *Historian*, what men have done. The *Grammarian* speaketh only of the rules of speech, and the *Rhetorician* and *Logician*, considering what in nature will soonest prove, and persuade thereon, give artificial rules, which still are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The *Physician* weigheth the nature of man's bo-

dy, and the nature of things helpful or hurtful unto it. And the *Metaphyſic*, though it be in the ſecond, and abſtract notions, and therefore be counted ſupernatural, yet doth he, indeed, build upon the depth of nature. Only the *Poet*, diſdaining to be tied to any ſuch ſubjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature: in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms ſuch as never were in nature, as the *Heroes*, *Demi-gods*, *Cyclops*, *Chymeras*, *Furies*, and ſuch like, ſo as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not incloſed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit. Nature never ſet forth the earth in ſo rich tapeſtry as diverſe poets have done; neither with ſo pleaſant rivers, fruitful trees, ſweet-ſmelling flowers, nor whatſoever elſe may make the too much loved earth more lovely; Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden. But let thoſe things alone, and go to man, for whom, as the other things are, ſo it ſeemeth

in him her uttermoſt cunning is employed, and know, Whether ſhe have brought forth ſo true a lover as *Theagenes*, ſo conſtant a friend as *Pylades*, ſo valiant a man as *Orlando*, ſo right a prince as *Xenophon*'s *Cyrus*, and ſo excellent a man every way as *Virgil*'s *Æneas*? Neither let this be jeſtingly conceived, becauſe the works of the one be eſſential, the other in imitation or fiction; for every underſtanding knoweth the ſkill of each artificer ſtandeth in that *idea*, or foreconceit of the work, and not in the work itſelf. And that the poet hath that *idea*, is manifeſt, by the delivering them forth in ſuch excellency as he had imagined them; which delivering forth, alſo, is not wholly imaginative, as we were wont to ſay by them that build caſtles in the air; but ſo far ſubſtantially it worketh, not only to make a *Cyrus*, which had been but a particular excellency, as nature might have done, but to beſtow a *Cyrus* upon the world to make many *Cyruſſes*, if they will learn aright, why, and how that Maker made him. Neither let it be deemed too ſaucy a compariſon, to balance

balance the higheſt point of man's wit with the efficacy of nature; but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who having made man to his own likeneſs, ſet him beyond, and over all the works of that ſecond nature, which in nothing he ſhewed ſo much as in Poetry, when, with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth ſurpaſſing her doings, with no ſmall arguments to the incredulous of that firſt accurſed fall of *Adam*, ſince our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it. But theſe arguments will by few be underſtood, and by fewer granted: thus much I hope will be given me, that the *Greeks*, with ſome probability of reaſon, gave him the name above all names of learning. Now let us go to a more ordinary opening of him, that the truth may be the more palpable; and ſo, I hope, though we get not ſo unmatched a praiſe, as the *etymology* of his names will grant, yet his very deſcription, which no man will deny, ſhall not juſtly be barred from a principal

commendation. *Poeſy*, therefore, is an art of *imitation*; for ſo *Ariſtotle* termeth it in the word μίμησις, that is to ſay, A repreſenting, counterfeiting, or figuring forth, to ſpeak metaphorically. A ſpeaking *picture*, with this end, To teach and delight. Of this have been three general kinds; the chief, both in antiquity and excellency, were they that did imitate the unconceivable excellencies of God; ſuch were *David* in his *Pſalms*; *Solomon* in his *Song of Songs*, in his *Eccleſiaſtes* and *Proverbs*; *Moſes* and *Deborah* in their hymns; and the writer of *Job*; which beſides others, the learned *Emanuel Tremellius*, and *Fr. Junius* do intitle, The poetical part of the ſcripture: Againſt theſe none will ſpeak that hath the Holy Ghoſt in due holy reverence. In this kind, though in a full wrong divinity, were *Orpheus*, *Amphion*, *Homer* in his Hymns, and many others, both *Greeks* and *Romans*. And this *Poeſy* muſt be uſed by whoſoever will follow St. *Paul*'s counſel, in ſinging pſalms when they are merry; and I know is uſed with the fruit of comfort by ſome, when, in ſorrow-

ful pangs of their death-bringing ſins, they find the conſolation of the never-leaving goodneſs. The ſecond kind, is of them that deal with matter philoſophical; either Moral, as *Tyrteus*, *Phocylides*, *Cato*; or natural, as *Lucretius*, and *Virgil*'s *Georgics*; or aſtronomical, as *Manilius* and *Pontanus*; or hiſtorical, as *Lucan*; which who miſlike, the fault is in their judgment, quite out of taſte, and not in the ſweet food of ſweetly uttered knowlege. But becauſe this ſecond ſort is wrapped within the fold of the propoſed ſubject, and takes not the free courſe of his own invention, whether they properly be Poets, or no, let *Grammarians* diſpute, and go to the third, indeed, right Poets, of whom chiefly this queſtion ariſeth: Betwixt whom and theſe ſecond is ſuch a kind of difference, as betwixt the meaner ſort of Painters, who counterfeit only ſuch faces as are ſet before them; and the more excellent, who, having no law but wit, beſtow that in colours upon you which is fitteſt for the eye to ſee, as the conſtant, though lamenting look of *Lucretia*, when ſhe puniſhed in her-

ſelf another's fault: wherein he painteth not *Lucretia*, whom he never ſaw, but painteth the outward beauty of ſuch a virtue. For theſe three be they which moſt properly do imitate to teach and delight; and to imitate, borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or ſhall be, but range only, reined with learned diſcretion, into the divine conſideration of what may be, and ſhould be. Theſe be they, that, as the firſt and moſt noble ſort, may juſtly be termed *Vates*: So theſe are waited on in the excellenteſt languages and beſt underſtandings, with the fore-deſcribed name of *Poets*. For theſe, indeed, do meerly make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodneſs in hand, which, without delight, they would fly as from a ſtranger, and teach to make them know that goodneſs whereunto they are moved; which being the nobleſt ſcope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to bark at them. Theſe be ſubdivided into ſundry more ſpecial denominations: The moſt notable be the *heroic*, *lyric*,

tragic, comic, ſatiric, iambic, elegiac, paſtoral, and certain others; ſome of theſe being termed according to the matter they deal with; ſome by the ſort of verſe they liked beſt to write in; for indeed the greateſt part of poets have apparelled their poetical inventions in that numerous kind of writing which is called *verſe.* Indeed but apparelled verſe, being but an ornament, and no cauſe to poetry, ſince there have been many moſt excellent poets that never verſified, and now ſwarm many verſifiers that need never anſwer to the name of poets. For *Xenophon,* who did imitate ſo excellently as to give us *effigiem juſti imperii,* the portraiture of a juſt empire, under the name of *Cyrus,* as *Cicero* ſaith of him, made therein an abſolute heroical poem. So did *Heliodorus,* in his ſugared invention of that picture of love in *Theagenes* and *Chariclea,* and yet both thoſe wrote in proſe; which I ſpeak to ſhew, that it is not rhyming and verſing that maketh a poet (no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who, though he pleaded in armour, ſhould be an advocate

and no ſoldier;) but it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what elſe, with that delightful teaching, which muſt be the right deſcribing note to know a poet by. Although indeed the ſenate of poets have choſen verſe as their fitteſt rayment; meaning, as in matter they paſſed all in all, ſo in manner to go beyond them, not ſpeaking, table-talk faſhion, or like men in a dream, words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but piecing each ſyllable of each word by juſt proportion, according to the dignity of the ſubject. Now therefore it ſhall not be amiſs, firſt, to weigh this latter ſort of poetry, By his works, and then, By his parts; and if in neither of theſe anatomies he be commendable, I hope we ſhall receive a more favourable ſentence. This purifying of wit, this inriching of memory, enabling of judgment, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learned, under what name ſoever it come forth, or to what immediate end ſoever it be directed, the final end is, To lead and draw us to as high a perfection, as our degenerate ſouls,

made worſe by their clay lodgings, can be capable of: This, according to the inclination of man, bred many formed impreſſions: for ſome that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowlege, and no knowlege to be ſo high or heavenly as to be acquainted with the ſtars, gave themſelves to *aſtronomy*; others perſuading themſelves to be *demi-gods*, if they knew the cauſes of things, became natural and ſupernatural *philoſophers*. Some an admirable delight drew to *muſic*; and ſome the certainty of demonſtrations to the *mathematics*; but all one and other having this ſcope, To know, and by knowlege to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body, to the enjoying his own divine eſſence. But when, by the balance of experience, it was found that the *aſtronomer*, looking to the ſtars, might fall in a ditch; that the enquiring *philoſopher* might be blind in himſelf; and the *mathematician* might draw forth a ſtrait line with a crooked heart; then, lo! did proof, the over-ruler of opinions, make manifeſt, that all theſe are but ſerving ſciences, which, as they have a private end in them-

ſelves, ſo yet are they all directed to the higheſt end of the miſtreſs knowlege, by the *Greeks* called ἀρχιτεκτονική, which ſtands, as I think, in the knowlege of a man's ſelf, in the ethic and politic conſideration, with end of well-doing, and not of well-knowing only: Even as the ſadler's next end is to make a good ſaddle, but his farther end, to ſerve a nobler faculty, which is horſemanſhip; ſo the horſeman's to ſoldiery; and the ſoldier not only to have the ſkill, but to perform the practice of a ſoldier. So that the ending end of all earthly learning, being virtuous action, thoſe ſkills that moſt ſerve to bring forth that, have a moſt juſt title to be princes over all the reſt; wherein, if we can ſhew it rightly, the poet is worthy to have it before any other competitors: Among whom principally to challenge it, ſtep forth the moral *Philoſophers*, whom, methinks, I ſee coming towards me with a ſullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by day light, rudely clothed, for to witneſs outwardly their contempt of outward things, with books in their hands againſt glory, where-

whereto they ſet their names, ſophiſtically ſpeaking againſt ſubtlety, and angry with any man in whom they ſee the foul fault of anger. Theſe men caſting largeſſes as they go, of definitions, diviſions, and diſtinctions, with a ſcornful interrogative, do ſoberly aſk, Whether it be poſſible to find any path ſo ready to lead a man to virtue, as that which teacheth what virtue is; and teacheth it not only by delivering forth his very being, his cauſes and effects, but alſo by making known his enemy Vice, which muſt be deſtroyed, and his cumberſome ſervant Paſſion, which muſt be maſtered, by ſhewing the generalities that contain it, and by the ſpecialities that are derived from it: laſtly, by plain ſetting down how it extends itſelf out of the limits of a man's own little world, to the government of families, and maintaining of public ſocieties? The *Hiſtorian* ſcarce gives leiſure to the *Moraliſt* to ſay ſo much, but that he, (loaden with old mouſe-eaten records, authorizing himſelf, for the moſt part, upon other hiſtories, whoſe greateſt authorities are built upon the notable foun-

dation *Hearſay*, having much ado to accord differing writers, and to pick truth out of partiality; better acquainted with a thouſand years ago, than with the peſent age, and yet better knowing how this world goes, than how his own wit runs; curious for antiquities, and inquiſitive of novelties, a wonder to young folks, and a tyrant in table-talk) denieth, in a great chafe, that any man, for teaching of virtue and virtuous actions, is comparable to him. I am *teſtis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magiſtra vitae, nuncia vetuſtatis.* The *philoſopher*, ſaith he, teacheth a diſputative virtue, but I do an active; his virtue is excellent in the dangerleſs *academy* of *Plato*, but mine ſheweth forth her honourable face in the battles of *Marathon, Pharſalia, Poictiers*, and *Agincourt:* He teacheth virtue by certain abſtract conſiderations: but I only bid you follow the footing of them that have gone before you: Old-aged experience goeth beyond the fine-witted *philoſopher*, but I give the experience of many ages: Laſtly, If he make the ſong-book, I put the learner's hand

to the lute; and if he be the guide, I am the light. Then would he allege you innumerable examples, confirming ſtory by ſtories, how much the wiſeſt ſenators and princes have been directed by the credit of hiſtory, as *Brutus*, *Alphonſus* of *Aragon*, (and who not? if need be.) At length, the long line of their diſputation makes a point in this, that the one giveth the precept, and the other the example. Now whom ſhall we find, ſince the queſtion ſtandeth for the higheſt form in the ſchool of learning, to be mediator? Truly, as me ſeemeth, the Poet; and if not a moderator, even the man that ought to carry the title from them both, and much more from all other ſerving ſciences. Therefore compare we the *Poet* with the *Hiſtorian* and with the moral *Philoſopher*; and if he go beyond them both, no other human ſkill can match him: For as for the *Divine*, with all reverence, he is ever to be excepted, not only for having his ſcope as far beyond any of theſe, as eternity exceedeth a moment, but even for paſſing each of theſe in themſelves: And for the *Lawyer*, though

Jus be the daughter of *Juſtice*, the chief of virtues, yet becauſe he ſeeks to make men good rather *formidine poenae*, than *virtutis amore*, or, to ſay righter, doth not endeavour to make men good, but that their evil hurt not others, having no care, ſo he be a good citizen, how bad a man he be: therefore, as our wickedneſs maketh him neceſſary, and neceſſity maketh him honourable, ſo is he not in the deepeſt truth to ſtand in rank with theſe, who all endeavour to take naughtineſs away, and plant goodneſs even in the ſecreteſt cabinet of our ſouls: and theſe four, are all that any way deal in the conſideration of mens manners, which being the ſupreme knowlege, they that beſt breed it, deſerve the beſt commendation. The *Philoſopher* therefore, and the *Hiſtorian*, are they which would win the goal, the one by precept, the other by example; but both, not having both, do both halt. For the *Philoſopher* ſitting down with the thorny arguments, the bare rule is ſo hard of utterance, and ſo miſty to be conceived, that one, that hath no other guide but him, ſhall wade in

him until he be old, before he ſhall find ſufficient cauſe to be honeſt. For his knowlege ſtandeth ſo upon the abſtract and general, that happy is that man who may underſtand him, and more happy, that can apply what he doth underſtand. On the other ſide, the *Hiſtorian*, wanting the precept, is ſo tied, not to what ſhould be, but to what is; to the particular truth of things, and not to the general reaſon of things; that his example draweth not neceſſary conſequence, and therefore a leſs fruitful doctrine. Now doth the peerleſs Poet perform both; for whatſoever the Philoſopher ſaith ſhould be done, he giveth a perfect picture of it, by ſome one by whom he pre-ſuppoſeth it was done, ſo as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example. A perfect picture (I ſay) for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philoſopher beſtoweth but a wordiſh deſcription, which doth neither ſtrike, pierce, nor poſſeſs the ſight of the ſoul, ſo much as that other doth. For as, in outward things, to a man that had never ſeen an *elephant*, or a

rhinoceros, who ſhould tell him moſt exquiſitely all their ſhape, colour, bigneſs, and particular marks, or of a gorgeous palace, an *architect*, who, declaring the full beauties, might well make the hearer able to repeat as it were, by rote, all he had heard, yet ſhould never ſatisfy his inward conceit, with being witneſs to itſelf of a true living knowlege: but the ſame man, as ſoon as he might ſee thoſe beaſts well painted, or that houſe well in model, ſhould ſtraitways grow, without need of any deſcription, to a judicial comprehending of them: So, no doubt, the *Philoſopher*, with his learned definitions, be it of virtues or vice, matters of public policy or private government, repleniſheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wiſdom, which, notwithſtanding, lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the ſpeaking picture of *Poeſy*. *Tully* taketh much pains, and many times not without poetical helps, to make us know what force the love of our country hath in us. Let us but hear old *Anchiſes*, ſpeak-

ing in the midſt of *Troy*'s flames, or ſee *Ulyſſes*, in the fulneſs of all *Calypſo*'s delights, bewail his abſence from barren and beggarly *Ithaca*: Anger, the *Stoics* ſaid, was a ſhort madneſs; let but *Sophocles* bring you *Ajax* on a ſtage, killing or whipping ſheep and oxen, thinking them the army of *Greeks* with their chieftains *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus*; and tell me, if you have not a more familiar inſight into anger, than finding in the ſchoolmen his *genus* and *difference?* See whether wiſdom and temperance in *Ulyſſes* and *Diomedes*, valour in *Achilles*, friendſhip in *Niſus* and *Euryalus*, even to an ignorant man, carry not an apparent ſhining; and, contrarily, the remorſe of conſcience in *Oedipus*; the ſoon repenting pride in *Agamemnon*; the ſelf-indevouring cruelty in his father *Atreus*; the violence of ambition in the two *Theban* brothers; the ſowre ſweetneſs of revenge in *Mædea*; and, to fall lower, the *Terentian Gnatho*, and our *Chaucer*'s *Pander*, ſo expreſſed, that we now uſe their names, to ſignify their trades: And, finally, all virtues, vices, and paſſions, ſo, in their

own natural ſtates, laid to the view, that we ſeem not to hear of them, but clearly to ſee through them? But even in the moſt excellent determination of goodneſs, what *Philoſopher*'s counſel can ſo readily direct a prince, as the feigned *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*? Or a virtuous man in all fortunes, as *Æneas* in *Virgil*? Of a whole common-wealth, as the way of Sir *Thomas Moore*'s *Utopia*? I ſay, The way, becauſe where Sir *Thomas Moore* erred, it was the fault of the man, and not of the poet: for that way of patterning a common-wealth was moſt abſolute, though he, perchance, hath not ſo abſolutely performed it. For the queſtion is, Whether the feigned image of Poetry, or the regular inſtruction of Philoſophy, hath the more force in teaching. Wherein, if the *Philoſophers* have more rightly ſhewed themſelves *Philoſophers*, than the *Poets* have attained to the high top of their profeſſion (as in truth,

———*Mediocribus eſſe poetis*
Non Dii, non homines, non conceſſere columnæ.)
HOR.

It

It is, I ſay again, not the fault of the art, but that by few men that art can be accompliſhed. Certainly, even our Saviour Chriſt could as well have given the moral common places of uncharitableneſs and humbleneſs, as the divine narration of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, or of diſobedience and mercy, as the heavenly diſcourſe of the loſt child and the gracious father; but that his thorough-ſearching wiſdom knew the eſtate of *Dives* burning in hell, and of *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s boſom, would more conſtantly, as it were, inhabit both the memory and judgment. Truly, for myſelf (me ſeems) I ſee before mine eyes, the loſt child's diſdainful prodigality turned to envy a ſwine's dinner: which, by the learned *Divines*, are thought not hiſtorical acts, but inſtructing parables.

For concluſion, I ſay, the *Philoſopher* teacheth, but he teacheth obſcurely, ſo as the learned only can underſtand him; that is to ſay, he teacheth them that are already taught. But the Poet is the food for the tender ſtomachs; the Poet is, indeed, the right popular *Philoſopher*. Whereof *Æſop*'s

tales give good proof, whoſe pretty Allegories, ſtealing under the formal tales of beaſts, make many more beaſtly than beaſts begin to hear the ſound of virtue from thoſe dumb ſpeakers.

But now may it be alleged, that if this managing of matters be ſo fit for the imagination, then muſt the *Hiſtorian* needs ſurpaſs, who brings you images of true matters, ſuch as, indeed, were done, and not ſuch as fantaſtically or falſely may be ſuggeſted to have been done. Truly, *Ariſtotle* himſelf, in his Diſcourſe of *Poeſy*, plainly determineth this queſtion, ſaying, that *Poetry* is φιλοσοφώτερόν et σπουδαιότερον, that is to ſay, it is more philoſophical, and more than hiſtory. His reaſon is, becauſe *Poeſy* dealeth with καθόλυ, that is to ſay, with the univerſal conſideration, and the hiſtory with καθέκαστον, the particular. Now, ſaith he, the univerſal ways, what is fit to be ſaid or done, either in likelihood or neceſſity, which the Poeſy conſidereth in his impoſed names; and the particular only maketh, whether *Alcibiades* did or ſuffered this or that: thus far *Ariſto-*

tle. Which reaſon of his, as all his, is moſt full of reaſon. For indeed, if the queſtion were, whether it were better to have a particular act truly, or falſely ſet down? there is no doubt which is to be choſen, no more than whether you had rather have *Veſpaſian*'s picture right as he was, or, at the painter's pleaſure, nothing reſembling? But if the queſtion be, for your own uſe and learning, whether it be better to have it ſet down as it ſhould be, or as it was? then, certainly, is more doctrinable the feigned *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*, than the true *Cyrus* in *Juſtin*; and the feigned *Æneas* in *Virgil*, than the right *Æneas* in *Dares Phrygius*: as to a lady that deſired to faſhion her countenance to the beſt grace, a painter ſhould more benefit her to portrait a moſt ſweet face, writing *Canidia* upon it, than to paint *Canidia* as ſhe was, who, *Horace* ſweareth, was full ill-favoured. If the *Poet* do his part aright, he will ſhew you in *Tantalus*, *Atreus*, and ſuch like, nothing that is not to be ſhunned; in *Cyrus*, *Æneas*, *Ulyſſes*, each thing to be followed: where the *Hiſtorian*, bound to

tell things, as things were, cannot be liberal, without he will be poetical, of a perfect pattern; but, as in *Alexander*, or *Scipio* himſelf, ſhew doings, ſome to be liked, ſome to be miſ-liked; and then how will you diſcern what to follow, but by your own diſcretion, which you had without reading *Q. Curtius?* And whereas, a man may ſay, though in univerſal conſideration of doctrine, the *Poet* prevaileth, yet that the hiſtory, in his ſaying ſuch a thing was done, doth warrant a man more in that he ſhall follow. The anſwer is manifeſt, that if he ſtand upon that *was*, as if he ſhould argue, becauſe it rained yeſterday, therefore it ſhould rain to day, then, indeed, hath it ſome advantage to a groſs conceit. But if he know an example only informs a conjectured likelihood, and ſo go by reaſon, the *Poet* doth ſo far exceed him, as he is to frame his example to that which is moſt reaſonable, be it in warlike, politic, or private matters, where the *Hiſtorian* in his bare, *was*, hath, many times, that which we call fortune, to over-rule the beſt wiſdom. Many times he

muſt tell events, thereof he can yield no cauſe, or if he do, it muſt be poetically. For, that a feigned example hath as much force to teach, as a true example, for as for to move, it is clear, ſince the feigned may be tuned to the higheſt key of paſſion: let us take one example wherein an *Hiſtorian* and a *Poet* did concur. *Herodotus* and *Juſtin* do both teſtify, that *Zopyrus*, king *Darius*'s faithful ſervant, ſeeing his maſter long reſiſted by the rebellious *Babylonians*, feigned himſelf in extreme diſgrace of his king; for verifying of which, he cauſed his own noſe and ears to be cut off, and flying to the *Babylonians*, was received, and, for his known valour, ſo far credited, that he did find means to deliver them over to *Darius*. Much like matters doth *Livy* record of *Tarquinius* and his ſon. *Xenophon* excellently feigned ſuch another ſtratagem, performed by *Abradatus* in *Cyrus*'s behalf. Now would I fain know, if occaſion be preſented unto you, to ſerve your prince by ſuch an honeſt diſſimulation, why do you not as well learn it of *Xenophon*'s fiction, as of the

other's verity? and, truly ſo much the better, as you ſhall ſave your noſe, by the bargain; for *Abradatus* did not counterfeit ſo far. So, then, the beſt of the *Hiſtorian* is ſubject to the *Poet*; for, whatſoever action or faction, whatſoever counſel, policy, or war-ſtratagem, the *Hiſtorian* is bound to recite, that may the *Poet*, if he liſt, with his imitation, make his own, beautifying it both for farther teaching, and more delighting, as it pleaſe him, having all, from *Dante*'s heaven to his hell, under the authority of his pen. Which, if I be aſked, what *Poets* have done ſo? as I might well name ſome, ſo yet, ſay I, and ſay again, I ſpeak of the art, and not of the artificer. Now, to that which commonly is attributed to the praiſe of hiſtory, in reſpect of the notable learning which is got by marking the ſucceſs, as tho' therein a man ſhould ſee virtue exalted, and vice puniſhed: truly, that commendation is peculiar to Poetry, and far off from Hiſtory; for, indeed, Poetry ever ſets virtue ſo out in her beſt colours, making fortune her well-waiting hand-maid, that one muſt needs

be enamoured of her. Well may you ſee *Ulyſſes* in a ſtorm, and in other hard plights; but they are but exerciſes of patience and magnanimity, to make them ſhine the more in the near following proſperity: and, of the contrary part, if evil men come to the ſtage, they ever go out (as the tragedy-writer anſwered to one that miſliked the ſhew of ſuch perſons) ſo manacled, as they little animate folks to follow them: But the Hiſtory, being captived to the truth of a fooliſh world, is many times a terror from well-doing, and an encouragement to unbridled wickedneſs. For ſee we not valiant *Miltiades* rot in his fetters? The juſt *Phocion*, and the accompliſhed *Socrates*, put to death like traitors? The cruel *Severus* live proſperouſly? The excellent *Severus* miſerably murdered? *Sylla* and *Marius* dying in their beds? *Pompey* and *Cicero* ſlain then when they would have thought exile a happineſs? See we not virtuous *Cato* driven to kill himſelf, and rebel *Cæſar* ſo advanced, that his name yet, after ſixteen hundred years, laſteth in the higheſt honour? And mark

but even *Cæſar*'s own words of the forenamed *Sylla* (who, in that, only, did honeſtly to put down his diſhoneſt tyranny) *literas neſcivit:* as if want of learning cauſed him to do well. He meant it not by Poetry, which, not content with earthly plagues, deviſeth new puniſhments in hell for tyrants: nor yet by Philoſophy, which teacheth *occidentes eſſe*, but, no doubt, by ſkill in Hiſtory; for that, indeed, can afford you *Cypſelus*, *Periander*, *Phalaris*, *Dionyſius*, and I know not how many more of the ſame kennel, that ſpeed well enough in their abominable injuſtice of uſurpation.

I conclude, therefore, that he excelleth Hiſtory, not only in furniſhing the mind with knowlege, but in ſetting it forward to that which deſerves to be called and accounted good: which ſetting forward, and moving to well-doing, indeed, ſetteth the lawrel crown upon the *Poets* as victorious, not only of the *Hiſtorian*, but over the *Philoſopher*, howſoever, in teaching, it may be queſtionable. For ſuppoſe it be granted, that which I ſuppoſe, with great reaſon, may be denied,

denied, that the *Philoſopher*, in reſpect of his methodical proceeding teach more perfectly than the *Poet*, yet do I think, that no man is ſo much φιλοφιλόσοφος, as to compare the *Philoſopher* in moving with the *Poet*. And, that moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well-nigh both the cauſe and effect of teaching; for who will be taught if he be not moved with deſire to be taught? And what ſo much good doth that teaching bring forth (I ſpeak ſtill of moral doctrine) as that it moveth one to do that which it doth teach. For as *Ariſtotle* ſaith, It is not γνῶσις but πρᾶξις muſt be the fruit: and how πρᾶξις can be, without being moved to practiſe, it is no hard matter to conſider. The *Philoſopher* ſheweth you the way, he informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediouſneſs of the way, as of the pleaſant lodging you ſhall have when your journey is ended, as of the many bye-turnings that may divert you from your way; but this to no man, but to him that will read him, and read him with attentive ſtudious painful-

neſs; which conſtant deſire whoſoever hath in him, hath already paſt half the hardneſs of the way, and therefore is beholden to the *Philoſopher* but for the other half. Nay, truly, learned men have learnedly thought that where once reaſon hath ſo much overmaſtered paſſion, as that the mind hath a free deſire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itſelf is as good as a *Philoſopher*'s book, ſince in nature we know it is well to do well, and what is well and what is evil, although, not in the words of art which *Philoſophers* beſtow upon us; for out of natural conceit the *Philoſophers* drew it: But to be moved to do that which we know, or to be moved with deſire to know, *hoc opus, hic labor eſt.*

Now, therein, of all ſciences, I ſpeak ſtill of human, and, according to the human conceit, is our *Poet* the *monarch.* For he doth not only ſhew the way, but giveth ſo ſweet a proſpect into the way, as will intice any man to enter into it: Nay, he doth, as if your journey ſhould lie through a fair vineyard, at the very firſt, give you a cluſter of

grapes, that, full of that taſte, you may long to paſs farther. He beginneth not with obſcure definitions, which muſt blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulneſs; but he cometh to you with words ſet in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for the well-inchanting ſkill of *muſic*, and with a tale, forſooth, he cometh unto you with a tale, which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedneſs to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take moſt wholeſome things by hiding them in ſuch other as have a pleaſant taſte: which, if one ſhould begin to tell them the nature of the *Aloes* or *Rhabarbarum* they ſhould receive, would ſooner take their phyſic at their ears than at their mouth; ſo is it in men (moſt of which are childiſh in the beſt things, 'till they be cradled in their graves) glad they will be to hear the tales of *Hercules*, *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Æneas*, and hearing them, muſt needs hear the right deſcription of wiſdom,

valour and juſtice; which, if they had been barely (that is to ſay, philoſophically) ſet out, they would ſwear they be brought to ſchool again. That imitation whereof *Poetry* is, hath the moſt conveniency to nature of all other: inſomuch that, as *Ariſtotle* ſaith, thoſe things, which in themſelves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monſters, are made, in poetical imitation, delightful. Truly, I have known men, that even with reading *Amadis de Gaul*, which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect *Poeſy*, have found their hearts moved to the exerciſe of courteſy, liberality, and eſpecially courage. Who readeth *Æneas* carrying old *Anchiſes* on his back, that wiſheth not, it were his fortune to perform ſo excellent an act? Whom doth not thoſe words of *Turnus* move (the tale of *Turnus* having planted his image in the imagination)

——Fugientem haec terra videbit?
Uſque adeone mori miſerum eſt? VIRG.

Where the *Philoſophers* (as they think) ſcorn to delight, ſo much they be content little to move, ſaving wrangling whether *Virtus*

be the chief or the only good: whether the contemplative or the active life do excel: Which *Plato* and *Boetius* well knew; and therefore made miſtreſs *Philoſophy* very often borrow the maſking raiment of *Poeſy*. For even thoſe hard-hearted evil men, who think virtue a ſchool-name, and know no other good but *indulgere genio*, and therefore deſpiſe the auſtere admonitions of the *Philoſopher*, and feel not the inward reaſon they ſtand upon, yet will be content to be delighted, which is all the good-fellow *Poet* ſeems to promiſe; and ſo ſteal to ſee the form of goodneſs, which ſeen, they cannot but love, ere themſelves be aware, as if they took a medicine of cherries.

Infinite proofs of the ſtrange effects of this poetical invention might be alledged; only two ſhall ſerve, which are ſo often remembered, as, I think, all men know them. The one of *Menenius Agrippa*, who, when the whole people of *Rome* had reſolutely divided themſelves from the *Senate*, with apparent ſhew of utter ruin, though he were for that time, an excellent orator, came not

not among them upon truſt, either of figurative ſpeeches, or cunning inſinuations, and much leſs with far-fetched *maxims* of *Philoſophy*, which, eſpecially if they were *Platonic*, they muſt have learned *Geometry* before they could have conceived: but, forſooth, he behaved himſelf like a homely and familiar *Poet*. He telleth them a tale, That there was a time, when all the parts of the body made a mutinous conſpiracy againſt the belly, which they thought devoured the fruits of each other's labour: they concluded, they would let ſo improfitable a ſpender ſtarve. In the end, to be ſhort, (for the tale is notorious, and as notorious that it was a tale) with puniſhing the belly, they plagued themſelves. This, applied by him, wrought ſuch effect in the people, as I never read that only words brought forth; but then, ſo ſudden, and ſo good an alteration, for upon reaſonable conditions, a perfect reconcilement enſued. The other is of *Nathan* the Prophet, who, when the holy *David* had ſo far forſaken God, as to confirm adultery with murder, when he was to do

the tendereſt office of a friend, in laying his own ſhame before his eyes, being ſent by God to call again ſo choſen a ſervant, how doth he it, but by telling of a man whoſe beloved lamb was ungratefully taken from his boſom? The application moſt divinely true, but the diſcourſe itſelf feigned: which made *David* (I ſpeak of the ſecond and inſtrumental cauſe) as in a glaſs ſee his own filthineſs, as that heavenly Pſalm of mercy well teſtifieth.*

By, theſe, therefore, examples and reaſons, I think it may be manifeſt, that the *Poet*, with that ſame hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth. And ſo a concluſion, not unfitly, enſues, that as Virtue is the moſt excellent reſting-place for all worldly learning to make his end of, ſo *Poetry*, being the moſt familiar to teach it, and moſt princely to move towards it, in the moſt excellent work, is the moſt excellent workman. But I am content, not only to decypher him by his works (although works in commendati-

* PSAL. LI.

on and diſpraiſe, muſt ever hold a high authority) but more narrowly will examine his parts; ſo that (as in a man) though all together may carry a preſence full of majeſty and beauty, perchance, in ſome one defectuous piece we may find blemiſh.

Now in his parts, kinds, or ſpecies, as you liſt to term them, it is to be noted, that ſome *Poeſies* have coupled together two or three kinds, as the *Tragical* and *Comical*, whereupon is riſen, the *Tragi-Comical*; ſome, in the manner, have mingled proſe and verſe, as *Sannazara* and *Boetius*; ſome have mingled matters *heroical* and *paſtoral*, but that cometh all to one in this queſtion; for if ſevered they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful: therefore, perchance, forgetting ſome, and leaving ſome as needleſs to be remembered, it ſhall not be amiſs, in a word, to cite the ſpecial kinds, to ſee what faults may be found in the right uſe of them.

Is it then the *poſtoral Poem* which is miſliked? (for perchance, where the hedge is loweſt, they will ſooneſt leap over;) is the poor pipe diſdained, which ſometimes, out

of

of *Maelibeus*'s mouth, can ſhew the miſery of people under hard lords and ravening ſoldiers? And again, by *Tyterus*, what bleſſedneſs is derived to them that lie loweſt, from the goodneſs of them that ſit higheſt? Sometimes under the pretty tales of wolves and ſheep, can include the whole conſiderations of wrong-doing and patience; ſometimes ſhew, that contentions for trifles can get but a trifling victory; where, perchance, a man may ſee, that even *Alexander* and *Darius*, when they ſtrove who ſhould be cock of this world's dunghil, the benefit they got, was, that the after-livers may ſay,

Haec memini, et victum fruſtra contendere Thyrſin;
Ex illo Corydon, Corydon eſt tempore nobis.

VIRG.

Or is it the lamenting *Elegiac*, which, in a kind heart, would move rather pity than blame, who bewaileth, with the great philoſopher *Heraclitus*, the weakneſs of mankind, and the wretchedneſs of the world; who, ſurely, is to be praiſed, either for compaſſionately accompanying juſt cauſes of la-

mentations, or for rightly painting out how weak be the paſſions of wofulneſs?

Is it the bitter, but wholeſome, *Iambic*, who rubs the galled mind, in making ſhame the trumpet of villainy, with bold and open crying out againſt naughtineſs?

Or the *Satiric*, who,

Omne vafer vitium ridenti tangit Amico,

Who ſportingly never leaveth, until he make a man laugh at folly, and at length, aſhamed to laugh at himſelf; which he cannot avoid, without avoiding the folly? who while *circum praecordia ludit*, giveth us to feel how many head-aches a paſſionate life bringeth to? How, when all is done,

Eſt ulubris animus, ſi nos non deficit aequus?

No, perchance, it is the *Comic*, whom naughty play-makers and ſtage-keepers, have juſtly made odious. To the arguments of abuſe, I will after anſwer, only thus much now is to be ſaid, that the *Comedy* is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he repreſenteth in the moſt ridicul-

ous and ſcornful ſorts that may be; ſo as it is impoſſible that any beholder can be content to be ſuch a one. Now, as in *geometry*, the oblique muſt be known as well as the right, and in *arithmetic*, the odd, as well as the even; ſo in the actions of our life, who ſeeth not the filthineſs of evil wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of virtue. This doth the *Comedy* handle ſo in our private and domeſtical matters, as, with hearing it, we get, as it were, an experience of what is to be looked for of a niggardly *Demea*, of a crafty *Davus*, of a flattering *Gnatho*, of a vain-glorious *Thraſo*: and not only to know what effects are to be expected, but to know who be ſuch, by the ſignifying badge given them by the *Comedian*. And little reaſon hath any man to ſay, that men learn the evil by ſeeing it ſo ſet out, ſince, as I ſaid before, there is no man living, but by the force truth hath in nature, no ſooner ſeeth theſe men play their parts, but wiſheth them in *piſtrinum*, although, perchance, the ſack of his own faults lie ſo behind his back, that he ſeeth

not himſelf to dance the ſame meaſure: whereto, yet, nothing can more open his eyes, than to ſee his own actions contemptibly ſet forth. So that the right uſe of *Comedy* will, I think, by no body be blamed.

And much leſs of the high and excellent *Tragedy*, that openeth the greateſt wounds, and ſheweth forth the *ulcers* that are covered with *tiſſue*; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants to manifeſt their tyrannical humours; that with ſtirring the affections of *admiration* and *commiſeration*, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilded roofs are builded: that maketh us know, *Qui ſceptra ſaevus duro imperio regit, Timet timentes, metus in auctorem redit.* But how much it can move, *Plutarch* yieldeth a notable teſtimony of the abominable tyrant *Alexander Pheraeus*, from whoſe eyes a *Tragedy*, well made and repreſented, drew abundance of tears, who, without all pity, had murdered infinite numbers, and ſome of his own blood; ſo as he that was not aſhamed to make matters for *Tragedies*, yet would not reſiſt the

ſweet violence of a *Tragedy*. And if it wrought no farther good in him, it was, that he, in deſpight of himſelf, withdrew himſelf from hearkening to that which might mollify his hardened heart. But it is not the *Tragedy* they do miſlike, for it were too abſurd to caſt out ſo excellent a repreſentation of whatſoever is moſt worthy to be learned.

Is it the *Lyric* that moſt diſpleaſeth, who with his tuned *Lyre*, and well accorded voice, giveth praiſe, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts? who giveth moral precepts and natural problems; who ſometimes raiſeth up his voice to the height of the heavens in ſinging the lauds of the immortal God. Certainly, I muſt confeſs mine own barbarouſneſs, I never heard the old * ſong of *Piercy* and *Douglas*, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is it ſung but by ſome blind crouder, with no rougher voice, than rude ſtile: which being ſo evil apparelled in the duſt and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work trim-

* The Ballad of *Chevy-Chaſe*.

med in the gorgeous eloquence of *Pindar*? In *Hungary*, I have ſeen it the manner at all feaſts, and other ſuch-like meetings, to have ſongs of their anceſtors valour, which that right ſoldier like nation think one of the chiefeſt kindlers of brave courage. The incomparable *Lacedaemonians* did not only carry that kind of *muſic* ever with them to the field, but even at home; as ſuch ſongs were made, ſo were they all content to be ſingers of them; when the luſty men were to tell what they did, the old men, what they had done, and the young, what they would do. And where a man may ſay, that *Pindar*, many times, praiſeth highly victories of ſmall moment, rather matters of ſport than virtue; as it may be anſwered, It was the fault of the *Poet*, and not of the *Poetry*, ſo, indeed, the chief fault was in the time and cuſtom of the *Greeks*, who ſet thoſe toys at ſo high a price, that *Philip* of *Macedon* reckoned a horſe-race won at *Olympus*, among his three fearful felicities. But as the inimitable *Pindar* often did, ſo is that kind moſt capable, and moſt fit, to awake the thoughts

from the ſleep of idleneſs, to embrace honourable enterprizes.

There reſts the *Heroical*, whoſe very name, I think, ſhould daunt all back-biters. For by what conceit can a tongue be directed to ſpeak evil of that which draweth with him no leſs champions than *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Æneas*, *Turnus*, *Tydeus*, *Rinaldo*? who doth not only teach and move to truth, but teacheth and moveth to the moſt high and excellent truth: who maketh magnanimity and juſtice ſhine through all miſty fearfulneſs and foggy deſires: who, if the ſaying of *Plato* and *Tully* be true, that who could ſee virtue, would be wonderfully raviſhed with the love of her beauty. This man ſetteth her out, to make her more lovely, in her holiday apparel, to the eye of any that will deign not to diſdain until they underſtand. But if any thing be already ſaid in the defenſe of ſweet *Poetry*, all concurreth to the maintaining the *Heroical*, which is not only a kind, but the beſt and moſt accompliſhed kind of *Poetry*. For, as the image of each action ſtirreth and in-

ſtructeth the mind, ſo the lofty image of ſuch worthies moſt inflameth the mind with deſire to be worthy, and informs with counſel how to be worthy. Only let *Æneas* be worn in the tablet of your memory, how he governeth himſelf in the ruin of his country, in the preſerving his old father, and carrying away his religious ceremonies; in obeying God's commandment, to leave *Dido*, though not only all paſſionate kindneſs, but even the human conſideration of virtuous gratefulneſs, would have craved other of him: how in ſtorms, how in ſports, how in war, how in peace, how a fugitive, how victorious, how beſieged, how beſieging, how to ſtrangers, how to allies, how to enemies, how to his own; laſtly, how in his inward ſelf, and how in his outward government; and, I think, in a mind moſt prejudiced with a prejudicating humour, he will be found in excellency fruitful. Yea, as *Horace* ſaith, *Melius Chryſippo et Crantore:* But truly, I imagine it falleth out with theſe poet-whippers, as with ſome good women, who often are ſick, but, in faith, they cannot tell where.

where. So the name of *Poetry* is odious to them, but neither his cauſe nor effects, neither the ſum that contains him, nor the particularities deſcending from him, give any faſt handle to their carping diſpraiſe.

Since, then, *Poetry* is of all human learning the moſt antient, and of moſt fatherly antiquity, as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings: ſince it is ſo univerſal, that no learned nation doth deſpiſe it, nor barbarous nation is without it: Since both *Roman* and *Greek* gave ſuch divine names unto it, the one of *propheſying*, the other of *making*; and that, indeed, that name of *making* is fit for him, conſidering, that where all other arts retain themſelves within their ſubject, and receive, as it were, their being from it, the *Poet*, only, bringeth his own ſtuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of the matter, but maketh matter for a conceit: Since neither his deſcription, nor end, containing any evil, the thing deſcribed cannot be evil; ſince his effects be ſo good as to teach goodneſs, and delight the learners of it; ſince therein (namely in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowleges) he doth not on-

ly far paſs the *Hiſtorian*, but, for inſtructing, is well nigh comparable to the *Philoſopher*; for moving, leaveth him behind him: Since the holy Scripture (wherein there is no uncleanneſs) hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Chriſt vouchſafed to uſe the flowers of it: Since all his kinds are not only in their united forms, but in their ſevered diſſections fully comendable; I think (and think I think rightly) the laurel crown, appointed for triumphant captains, doth worthily, of all other learnings, honour the *Poet*'s triumph.

But becauſe we have ears as well as tongues, and that the lighteſt reaſons that may be, will ſeem to weigh greatly, if nothing be put in the counter-balance, let us hear, and, as well as we can, ponder what objections be made againſt this art, which may be worthy either of yielding or anſwering. Firſt, truly, I note, not only in theſe μισομύσοι Poet-haters, but in all that kind of people who ſeek a praiſe by diſpraiſing others, that they do prodigally ſpend a great many wandering words in quips and ſcoffs, carp-

ing and taunting at each thing, which, by ſtirring the ſpleen, may ſtay the brain from a thorough beholding the worthineſs of the ſubject. Thoſe kind of objections, as they are full of a very idle eaſineſs, ſince there is nothing of ſo ſacred a majeſty, but that an itching tongue may rub itſelf upon it, ſo deſerve they no other anſwer, but, inſtead of laughing at the jeſt, to laugh at the jeſter. We know a playing wit can praiſe the diſcretion of an aſſe, the comfortableneſs of being in debt, and the jolly commodities of being ſick of the plague: So, of the contrary ſide, if we will turn *Ovid*'s verſe,

Ut lateat virtus proximitate mali,

That good lies hid in nearneſs of the evil, *Agrippa* will be as merry in the ſhewing the vanity of ſcience, as *Eraſmus* was in the commending of folly: neither ſhall any man or matter eſcape ſome touch of theſe ſmiling railers. But for *Eraſmus* and *Agrippa*, they had another foundation than the ſuperficial part would promiſe. Marry, theſe other pleaſant fault-finders, who will correct

× the *verb* before they underſtand the *noun*, and confute others knowlege, before they confirm their own, I would have them only remember, that ſcoffing cometh not of wiſdom; ſo as the beſt title in true *Engliſh* they get with their merriments, is to be called *good fools*; for ſo have our grave forefathers ever termed that humorous kind of jeſture. But that which giveth greateſt ſcope to their ſcorning humour, is rhyming and verſing. It is already ſaid (and, as I think, truly ſaid) it is not rhyming and verſing that maketh *Poeſy:* one may be a *Poet* without verſing, and a verſifier without *Poetry*. But yet, preſuppoſe it were inſeparable, as, indeed, it ſeemeth *Scaliger* judgeth truly, it were an inſeparable commendation: for if *oratio* next to *ratio*, ſpeech next to reaſon, be the greateſt gift beſtowed upon *mortality*, that cannot be praiſeleſs, which doth moſt poliſh that bleſſing of ſpeech; which conſidereth each word, not only, as a man may ſay, by his forcible quality, but by his beſt meaſured quantity; carrying even in themſelves a *harmony*,

without, perchance, number, meaſure, order, proportion, be in our time grown odious. But lay aſide the juſt praiſe it hath, by being the only fit ſpeech for *muſic* (*muſic*, I ſay, the moſt divine ſtriker of the ſenſes;) thus much is undoubtedly true, that if reading be fooliſh without remembering, memory being the only treaſure of knowlege, thoſe words which are fitteſt for memory, are likewiſe moſt convenient for knowlege. Now, that verſe far exceedeth proſe, in the knitting up of the memory, the reaſon is manifeſt, the words (beſides their delight, which hath a great affinity to memory) being ſo ſet, as one cannot be loſt, but the whole work fails; which accuſing itſelf, calleth the remembrance back to itſelf, and ſo moſt ſtrongly confirmeth it. Beſides, one word ſo, as it were, begetting another, as be in rhyme or meaſured verſe, by the former a man ſhall have a near gueſs to the follower. Laſtly, even they that have taught the art of memory, have ſhewed nothing ſo apt for it, as a certain room divided into many places, well

and thoroughly known: Now that hath the verſe in effect perfectly, every word having his natural ſeat, which ſeat muſt needs make the word remembered. But what needs more in a thing ſo known to all men? Who is it, that ever was a ſcholar, that doth not carry, away ſome verſes of *Virgil*, *Horace*, or *Cato* which in his youth he learned, and even to his old age ſerve him for hourly leſſons? as,

Percontatorem fugito nam garrulus idem eſt;
Dum tibi quiſque placet credula turba ſumas.

But the fitneſs it hath for memory is notably proved by all delivery of arts, wherein, for the moſt part, from *Grammar* to *Logic*, *Mathematics*, *Phyſic*, and the reſt, the rules chiefly neceſſary to be borne away, are compiled in verſes. So that verſe being in itſelf ſweet and orderly, and being beſt for memory, the only handle of knowlege, it muſt be in jeſt that any man can ſpeak againſt it.

Now, then, go we to the moſt important imputations laid to the poor *Poets*; for aught I can yet learn, they are theſe.

Firſt, That there being many other more fruitful knowleges, a man might better ſpend his time in them, than in this.

Secondly, That it is the mother of lyes.

Thirdly, That it is the nurſe of abuſe, infecting us with many peſtilent deſires, with a *Syren* ſweetneſs, drawing the mind to the ſerpent's tail of ſinful fancies; and herein, eſpecially, *Comedies* give the largeſt field to ear, as *Chaucer* ſaith, how both in other nations, and in ours, before *Poets* did ſoften us, we were full of courage, given to martial exerciſes, the pillars of manlike liberty, and lulled aſleep in ſhady idleneſs with *Poets* paſtimes.

And, *laſtly*, and chiefly, they cry out, with open mouth, as if they had over-ſhot *Robin Hood*, that *Plato* baniſhed them out of the common-wealth. Truly, this is much, if there be much truth in it.

Firſt, To the firſt, that a man might better ſpend his time, is a reaſon indeed: but it doth, as they ſay, but *petere principium*. For if it be, as I affirm, that no learning is ſo good, as that which teacheth and moveth

to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto ſo much as *Poeſy*, then is the concluſion manifeſt, that ink and paper cannot be to a more profitable purpoſe employed. And certainly, though a man ſhould grant their firſt aſſumption, it ſhould follow (methinks) very unwillingly, that good is not good, becauſe better is better. But I ſtill and utterly deny, that there is ſprung out of the earth a more fruitful knowlege.

To the *Second*, therefore, That they ſhould be the principal lyars, I anſwer *paradoxically*, but truly, I think truly, that of all writters under the ſun, the *Poet* is the leaſt lyar, and though he would, as a *Poet*, can ſcarcely be a lyar. The *Aſtronomer*, with his couſin the *Geometrician*, can hardly eſcape when they take upon them to meaſure the height of the ſtars. How often, think you, do the *Phyſicians* lye, when they aver things good for ſickneſſes, which afterwards ſend *Charon* a great number of ſouls drowned in a potion before they come to his ferry? And no leſs of the reſt which take upon them to affirm: Now for the

Poet,

Poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lyeth; for, as I take it, to lye, is to affirm that to be true which is false: So as the other *Artists*, and especially the *Historian*, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowlege of mankind, hardly escape from many lyes: But the *Poet*, as I said before, never affirmeth, the *Poet* never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writeth: He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry, calleth the sweet *Muses* to aspire unto him a good invention: In troth, not labouring to tell you what is, or is not, but what should, or should not be. And therefore though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lyeth not, unless we will say, that *Nathan* lyed in his speech, before alledged, to *David*; which, as a wicked man durst scarce say, so think I, none so simple would say, that *Æsop* lyed in the tales of his beasts; for who thinketh that *Æsop* wrote it for actually true, were well worthy to have his name chronicled among the

beaſts he writeth of. What child is there, that coming to play, and ſeeing *THEBES* written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is *Thebes?* If then a man can arrive to the child's age, to know that the *Poets* perſons and doings, are but pictures what ſhould be, and not ſtories what have been, they will never give the lye to things not affirmatively, but allegorically and figuratively, written; and therefore, as in hiſtory, looking for truth, they may go away full fraught with falſhood, ſo in *Poeſy*, looking but for fiction, they ſhall uſe the narration but as an imaginative ground-plat of a profitable invention. But hereto is replied, that the *Poets* give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actual truth, and ſo not being true, proveth a falſhood. And doth the *Lawyer* lye then, when, under the names of *John* of the *Sile*, and *John* of the *Nokes*, he putteth his caſe? But that is eaſily anſwered, their naming of men, is but to make their picture the more lively, and not to build any hiſtory. Painting men, they cannot leave men nameleſs:

We ſee we cannot play at cheſs, but that we muſt give names to our cheſs-men; and yet, methinks, he were a very partial champion of truth, that would ſay we lyed, for giving a piece of wood the reverend title of a biſhop. The *Poet* nameth *Cyrus* and *Æneas* no other way, than to ſhew what men of their fames, fortunes, and eſtates, ſhould do.

Their *Third* is, How much it abuſeth mens wit, training it to a wanton ſinfulneſs, and luſtful love. For, indeed, that is the principal, if not, only, abuſe, I can hear alleged. They ſay, the *Comedies* rather teach than reprehend amorous conceits. They ſay the *Lyric* is larded with paſſionate *ſonnets*, the *Elegiac* weeps the want of his miſtreſs, and that even to the *Heroical*, *Cupid* hath ambitiouſly climbed. Alas! Love, I would thou couldſt as well defend thyſelf, as thou canſt offend others? I would thoſe on whom thou doſt attend, could either put thee away, or yield good reaſon why they keep thee! But grant love of beauty to be a beaſtly fault, although it be

very hard, ſince only man, and no beaſt, hath that gift to diſcern beauty; grant that lovely name of love to deſerve all hateful reproaches, although even ſome of my maſters the *Philoſophers* ſpent a good deal of their lamp-oyl in ſetting forth the excellency of it; grant, I ſay, what they will have granted, that not only love, but luſt, but vanity, but if they liſt, ſcurrility, poſſeſs many leaves of the *Poet*'s books, yet, think I, when this is granted, they will find their ſentence may, with good manners, put the laſt words foremoſt; and not ſay, that *Poetry* abuſeth man's wit, but that man's wit abuſeth *Poetry*. For I will not deny, but that man's wit may make *Poeſy*, which ſhould be μιμησις: which ſome learned have defined figuring forth good things, to be φαντασικη, which doth contrariwiſe infect the fancy with unworthy objects, as the painter, who ſhould give to the eye either ſome excellent perſpective, or ſome fine picture fit for building or fortification, or containing in it ſome notable example, as *Abraham* ſacrificing his ſon *Iſaac*, *Judith* killing *Ho-*

loſerneſs, *David* fighting with *Goliah*, may leave thoſe, and pleaſe an ill-pleaſed eye with wanton ſhews of better hidden matters. But what! ſhall the abuſe of a thing make the right uſe odious? Nay, truly, though I yield that *Poeſy* may not only be abuſed, but that being abuſed, by the reaſon of his ſweet charming force, it can do more hurt than any other army of words, yet ſhall it be ſo far from concluding, that the abuſe ſhall give reproach to the abuſed, that, contrariwiſe, it is a good reaſon, that whatſoever being abuſed, doth moſt harm, being rightly uſed (and upon the right uſe, each thing receives his title) doth moſt good. Do we not ſee ſkill of phyſic, the beſt rampire to our often aſſaulted bodies, being abuſed, teach poyſon, the moſt violent deſtroyer? Doth not knowlege of law, whoſe end is, to even and right all things, being abuſed, grow the crooked foſterer of horrible injuries? Doth not (to go in the higheſt) God's word abuſed, breed hereſy, and his name abuſed, become blaſphemy? Truly, a needle cannot do much hurt, and as

truly (with leave of ladies be it ſpoken) it cannot do much good. With a ſword thou mayſt kill thy father, and with a ſword thou mayſt defend thy prince and country: ſo that, as in their calling *Poets*, fathers of lyes, they ſaid nothing, ſo in this their argument of abuſe, they prove the commendation.

They allege herewith, that before *Poets* began to be in price, our nation had ſet their heart's delight upon action, and not imagination, rather doing things worthy to be written, than writing things fit to be done. What that before-time was, I think ſcarcely *Sphynx* can tell: ſince no memory is ſo ancient, that gives not the precedence to *Poetry*. And certain it is, that in our plaineſt homelineſs, yet never was the *Albion* nation without *Poetry*. Marry, this argument, though it be levelled againſt *Poetry*, yet is it indeed a chain-ſhot againſt all learning or bookiſhneſs, as they commonly term it. Of ſuch mind were certain *Goths*, of whom it is written, that having in the ſpoil of a famous city, taken a fair library, one hangman

belike fit to execute the fruits of their wits, who had murdered a great number of bodies, would have ſet fire in it. *No,* ſaid another, very gravely, *take heed what you do, for while they are buſy about thoſe toys, we ſhall, with more leiſure, conquer their countries.* This, indeed, is the ordinary doctrine of ignorance, and many words ſometimes I have heard ſpent in it: but becauſe this reaſon is generally againſt all learning, as well as *Poetry,* or rather all learning but *Poetry*; becauſe it were too large a digreſſion to handle it, or at leaſt too ſuperfluous, ſince it is manifeſt that all government of action is to be gotten by knowlege, and knowlege beſt, by gathering many knowleges, which is reading; I only ſay with *Horace,* to him that is of that opinion,

Jubeo ſtultum eſſe libenter——

For as for *Poetry* itſelf, it is the freeſt from this objection, for *Poetry* is the companion of camps. I dare undertake, *Orlando Furioſo,* or honeſt king *Arthur,* will never diſpleaſe a ſoldier: but the quiddity of *Ens*

and *Prima materia*, will hardly agree with a corſelet. And therefore, as I ſaid in the beginning, even *Turks* and *Tartars* are delighted with *Poets*. *Homer* a *Greek*, flouriſhed before *Greece* flouriſhed: and if to a ſlight conjecture a conjecture may be oppoſed, truly it may ſeem, that as by him their learned men took almoſt their firſt light of knowlege, ſo their active men received their firſt motions of courage. Only *Alexander*'s example may ſerve, who by *Plutarch*, is accounted of ſuch virtue, that fortune was not his guide, but his footſtool, whoſe acts ſpeak for him, though *Plutarch* did not, to be indeed the *Phoenix* of warlike princes. This *Alexander*, left his ſchoolmaſter, living *Ariſtotle*, behind him, but took dead *Homer* with him. He put the philoſopher *Calliſthenes* to death, for his ſeeming philoſophical, indeed mutinous ſtubbornneſs; but the chief thing he was ever heard to wiſh for, was, that *Homer* had been alive. He well found he received more bravery of mind by the pattern of of *Achilles*, than by hearing the definition of fortitude. And

therefore

therefore, if *Cato* miſliked *Fulvius* for carrying *Ennius* with him to the field, it may be anſwered, that if *Cato* miſliked it, the noble *Fulvius* liked it, or elſe he had not done it; for it was not the excellent *Cato Uticenſis*, whoſe authority I would much more have reverenced: but it was the former, in truth a bitter puniſher of faults, but elſe a man that had never ſacrificed to the *Graces*. He miſliked and cried out againſt all *Greek* learning, and yet, being fourſcore years old, began to learn it, belike fearing that *Pluto* underſtood not *Latin*. Indeed the *Roman* laws allowed no perſon to be carried to the wars, but he that was in the ſoldiers roll. And therefore though *Cato* miſliked his muſtered perſon, he miſliked not his work. And if he had, *Scipio Nyſica* (judged by common conſent the beſt *Roman*) loved him: both the other *Scipio* brothers, who had by their virtues no leſs ſurnames than of *Aſia* and *Afric*, ſo loved him, that they cauſed his body to be buried in their ſepulture. So as *Cato*'s authority being but againſt his perſon, and that

anſwered with ſo far greater than himſelf, is herein of no validity.

But now indeed my burden is great, that *Plato*'s name is laid upon me, whom I muſt confeſs of all *Philoſophers*, I have ever eſteemed moſt worthy of reverence; and with good reaſon, ſince of all *Philoſophers*, he is the moſt *poetical:* yet if he will defile the fountain out of which his flowing ſtreams have proceeded, let us boldly examine with what reaſons he did it.

Firſt, truly, a man might malicioufly object, that *Plato*, being a *Philoſopher*, was a natural enemy of *Poets*. For, indeed, after the *Philoſophers* had picked out of the ſweet myſteries of *Poetry*, the right diſcerning true points of knowlege, they forthwith putting it in method, and making a ſchool art of that which the *Poets* did only teach by a divine delightfulneſs, beginning to ſpurn at their guides, like ungrateful apprentices, were not content to ſet up ſhop for themſelves, but ſought by all means to diſcredit their maſters; by the force of delight being barred them, the leſs they could overthrow

them, the more they hated them. For indeed they found for *Homer*, ſeven cities ſtrove who ſhould have him for their citizen, where many cities baniſhed *Philoſophers*, as not fit members to live among them. For only repeating certain of *Euripides*'s verſes, many *Athenians* had their lives ſaved of the *Syracuſians*, where the *Athenians* themſelves thought many *Philoſophers* unworthy to live. Certain *Poets*, as *Simonides*, and *Pindar*, had ſo prevailed with *Hiero* the firſt, that of a tyrant they made him a juſt king: where *Plato* could do ſo little with *Dionyſius*, that he himſelf, of a *Philoſopher*, was made a ſlave. But who ſhould do this, I confeſs, ſhould requite the objections made againſt *Poets*, with like cavilations againſt *Philoſophers*: as likewiſe one ſhould do, that ſhould bid one read *Phaedrus* or *Sympoſium* in *Plato*, or the diſcourſe of love in *Plutarch*, and ſee whether any *Poet* do authorize abominable filthineſs as they do.

Again, a man might aſk, out of what common-wealth *Plato* doth baniſh them? In ſooth, thence where he himſelf alloweth com-

munity of women. So as belike, this baniſhment grew not for effeminate wantonneſs, ſince little ſhould poetical *ſonnets* be hurtful, when a man might have what woman he liſted. But I honour philoſophical inſtructions, and bleſs the wits which bred them, ſo as they be not abuſed, which is likewiſe ſtretched to *Poetry*. Saint *Paul* himſelf ſets a watch-word upon *Philoſophy*, indeed upon the abuſe. So doth *Plato* upon the abuſe, not upon *Poetry*. *Plato* found fault, that the *Poets* of his time filled the world with wrong opinions of the Gods, making light tales of that unſpotted eſſence; and therefore would not have the youth depraved with ſuch opinions. Herein may much be ſaid: let this ſuffice; the *Poets* did not induce ſuch opinions, but did imitate thoſe opinions already induced. For all the *Greek* ſtories can well teſtify, that the very religion of that time ſtood upon many, and many-faſhioned Gods: not taught ſo by *Poets*, but followed according to their nature of imitation. Who liſt may read in *Plutarch*, the diſcourſes of *Iſis*, and *Oſiris*.

of the cauſe why oracles ceaſed, of the divine providence, and ſee whether the *Theology* of that nation ſtood not upon ſuch dreams, which the *Poets* indeed ſuperſtitiouſly obſerved. And truly ſince they had not the light of Chriſt, did much better in it than the *Philoſophers*, who, ſhaking off ſuperſtition, brought in *Atheiſm*.

Plato, therefore, whoſe authority I had much rather juſtly conſtrue, than unjuſtly reſiſt, meant not in general of *Poets*, in thoſe words of which *Julius Scaliger* ſaith; *Qua auctoritate barbari quidam atque inſipidi abuti velint ad poetas republica exigendos.* But only meant to drive out thoſe wrong opinions of the deity: whereof now, without farther law, *Chriſtianity* hath taken away all the hurtful belief, perchance as he thought, nouriſhed by then eſteemed *Poets*. And a man need go no farther than to *Plato* himſelf, to know his meaning; who, in his dialogue called *Iön*, giveth high, and rightly, divine commendation unto *Poetry*. So as *Plato* baniſhing the abuſe, not the thing, not baniſhing it, but giving due honour to

it, ſhall be our patron, and not our adverſary. For, indeed, I had much rather, ſince truly I may do it, ſhew their miſtaking of *Plato*, under whoſe lyon's ſkin they would make an aſs-like braying againſt *Poeſy*, than go about to overthrow his authority; whom, the wiſer a man is, the more juſt cauſe he ſhall find to have in admiration: eſpecially ſince he attributed unto *Poeſy* more than myſelf do; namely, to be a very inſpiring of a divine force, far above man's wit, as in the forenamed dialogue is apparent.

Of the other ſide, who would ſhew the honours have been by the beſt ſort of judgments granted them, a whole ſea of examples would preſent themſelves; *Alexanders*, *Caeſars*, *Scipios*, all favourers of *Poets*: *Laelius*, called the Roman *Socrates*, himſelf a *Poet*; ſo as part of *Heautontimorumenos* in *Terence*, was ſuppoſed to be made by him. And even the *Greek Socrates*, whom *Apollo* confirmeth to be the only wiſe man, is ſaid, to have ſpent part of his old time in putting *Æſop*'s fables into verſe. And therefore, full evil ſhould it become his ſcholar

Plato, to put such words in his master's mouth against *Poets*. But what needs more? *Aristotle* writes the art of *Poesy*; and why, if it should not be written? *Plutarch* teacheth the use to be gathered of them, and how, if they should not be read? And who reads *Plutarch*'s either history or *philosophy*, shall find he trimmeth both their garments with gards of *Poesy*.

But I list not to defend *Poesy* with the help of his underling *Historiographer*. Let it suffice to have shewed, it is a fit soil for praise to dwell upon, and what dispraise may be set upon it, is either easily overcome, or transformed into just commendation. So that since the excellencies of it may be so easily and so justly confirmed, and the low creeping objections so soon trodden down; it not being an art of lyes, but of true doctrine; not of effeminateness, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing man's wit, but of strengthening man's wit; not banished, but honoured by *Plato*; let us rather plant more laurels for to ingarland the *Poets* heads (which humour of being laureat, as besides

them only triumphant captains were, is a ſufficient authority to ſhew the price they ought to be held in) than ſuffer the ill-favoured breath of ſuch wrong ſpeakers once to blow upon the clear ſprings of *Poeſy*.

But ſince I have run ſo long a career in this matter, methinks, before I give my pen a full ſtop, it ſhall be but a little more loſt time to inquire, why *England*, the mother of excellent minds, ſhould be grown ſo hard a ſtep-mother to *Poets*, who, certainly, in wit, ought to paſs all others, ſince all only proceeds from their wit, being, indeed, makers of themſelves, not takers of others. How can I but exclaim,

Muſa mihi cauſas memora quo numine laeſo.

Sweet *Poeſy*, that hath antiently had kings, emperors, ſenators, great captains, ſuch as, beſides a thouſand others, *David*, *Adrian*, *Sophocles*, *Germanicus*, not only to favour *Poets*, but to be *Poets*: and of our nearer times, can preſent for her patrons, a *Robert* king of *Sicily*, the great king *Francis* of

of *France*, king *James* of *Scotland*; ſuch cardinals as *Bembus* and *Bibiena*; ſuch famous preachers and teachers as *Beza* and *Melancthon*; ſo learned *philoſophers* as *Fracaſtorius* and *Scaliger*; ſo great orators as *Pontanus* and *Muretus*; ſo piercing wits as *George Buchanan*; ſo grave counſellors, as beſides many, but before all, that *Hoſpital* of *France*; than whom, I think, that realm never brought forth a more accompliſhed judgment, more firmly builded upon virtue; I ſay, theſe, with numbers of others, not only to read others *Poeſies*, but to *poetiſe* for others reading: that *Poeſy*, thus embraced, in all other places, ſhould only find, in our time, a hard welcome in *England*; I think the very earth laments it, and therefore decks our ſoil with fewer laurels than it was accuſtomed; for heretofore *Poets* have in *England* alſo flouriſhed, and, which is to be noted, even in thoſe times when the trumpet of *Mars* did ſound loudeſt. And now, that an over-faint quietneſs ſhould ſeem to ſtrew the houſe for *Poets*, they are, almoſt, in as good reputation, as the *mounte-*

banks at *Venice*. Truly, even that, as of the one ſide it giveth great praiſe to *Poeſy*, which, like *Venus* (but to better purpoſe) had rather be troubled in the net with *Mars* than enjoy the homely quiet of *Vulcan*; ſo ſerveth it for a piece of a reaſon, why they are leſs grateful to idle *England*, which now can ſcarce endure the pain of a pen. Upon this, neceſſarily followeth, that baſe men, with ſervile wits, undertake it, who think it enough if they can be rewarded of the printer: and ſo as *Epaminondas* is ſaid, with the honour of his virtue, to have made an office, by his exerciſing it, which before was contemptible, to become highly reſpected; ſo theſe men, no more but ſetting their names to it, by their own diſgracefulneſs, diſgrace the moſt graceful *Poeſy*. For now, as if all the *muſes* were got with child, to bring forth baſtard poets, without any commiſſion, they do poſt over the banks of *Helicon*, until they make the readers more weary than poſt horſes; while, in the mean time, they

Queis meliore luto finxit praecordia Titan,

are better content to ſuppreſs the out-flowings of their wit, than by publiſhing them to be accounted knights of the ſame order. But I that, before ever I durſt aſpire unto the dignity, am admitted into the company of the *Paper-blurrers*, do find the very true cauſe of our wanting eſtimation, is want of deſert, taking upon us to be *Poets* in deſpite of *Pallas*. Now wherein we want deſert, were a thank-worthy labour to expreſs. But if I knew, I ſhould have mended myſelf; but as I never deſired the title, ſo have I neglected the means to come by it, only, over-maſtered by ſome thoughts, I yielded an inky tribute unto them. Marry, they that delight in *Poeſy* itſelf, ſhould ſeek to know what they do: and how they do, eſpecially, look themſelves in an unflattering glaſs of reaſon, if they be inclinable unto it. For *Poeſy* muſt not be drawn by the ears, it muſt be gently led, or rather it muſt lead, which was partly the cauſe that made the antient learned affirm, It was a divine, and no human ſkill, ſince all other knowleges lie ready for any that have ſtrength of wit: a

Poet no induſtry can make, if his own *genius* be not carried into it. And therefore is an old proverb, *Orator fit, Poeta naſcitur.* Yet confeſs I always, that as the fertileſt ground muſt be manured, ſo muſt the higheſt flying wit have a *Daedalus* to guide him. That *Daedalus*, they ſay, both in this, and in other, hath three wings to bear itſelf up into the air of due commendation: that is, *Art*, *Imitation*, and *Exerciſe*. But theſe, neither artificial rules, nor imitative patterns, we much cumber ourſelves withal. Exerciſe, indeed, we do, but that, very fore-backwardly; for where we ſhould exerciſe to know, we exerciſe as having known; and ſo is our brain delivered of much matter, which never was begotten by knowlege. For there being two principal parts, matter to be expreſſed by words, and words to expreſs the matter, in neither, we uſe art or imitation rightly. Our matter is *quodlibet*, indeed, though wrongly performing *Ovid*'s verſe:

Quicquid conabor dicere, verſus erit.

Never marſhalling it into any aſſured rank, that, almoſt, the readers cannot tell where to find themſelves.

Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his *Troilus* and *Creſſida*; of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he, in that miſty time, could ſee ſo clearly, or that we, in this clear age, go ſo ſtumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fit to be forgiven in ſo great an antiquity. I account *The Mirror of Magiſtrates*, meetly furniſhed of beautiful parts. And in the earl of *Surrey*'s *Lyrics*, many things taſting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind. The *Shepherd*'s *Kalander* * hath much *Poetry* in his eclogues, indeed, worthy the reading, if I be not deceived. That ſame framing of his ſtile to an old ruſtic language, I dare not allow: ſince neither *Theocritus* in *Greek*, *Virgil* in *Latin*, nor *Sannazara* in *Italian*, did affect it. Beſides theſe, I do not remember to have ſeen but few (to ſpeak boldly) printed that have poetical ſinews in them. For

* By SPENSER.

proof whereof, let but moſt of the verſes be put in proof, and then aſk the meaning, and it will be found, that one verſe did but beget another, without ordering, at the firſt, what ſhould be at the laſt, which becomes a confuſed maſs of words, with a tinkling ſound of rhyme, barely accompanied with reaſon. Our tragedies and comedies, not without cauſe, cried out againſt, obſerving rules neither of honeſt civility, nor ſkilful *poetry*. Excepting *Gorboduc* † (again I ſay of thoſe that I have ſeen) which notwithſtanding, as it is full of ſtately ſpeeches, and well-ſounding phraſes, climbing to the height of *Seneca* his ſtile, and as full of notable morality, which it doth moſt delightfully teach, and ſo obtain the very end of *Poeſy*; yet, in truth, it is very defectuous

† This play was written by THOMAS SACKVILE, Eſq; (afterwards Lord BUCKHURST, and earl of DORSET) and Mr. THOMAS NORTON. It was firſt printed in the year 1565. under the title of FERREX and PORREX; but in 1590. it was changed to that of *The Tragedy of* GORBODUC. It was preſented by the gentlemen of the *Inner-Temple*, before Queen ELIZABETH, and accounted an excellent piece. See *The Poetical Regiſter*, p. 193.

in the circumſtances; which grieves me, becauſe it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies. For it is faulty both in place and time, the two neceſſary companions of all corporal actions. For where the ſtage ſhould always repreſent but one place; and the uttermoſt time pre-ſuppoſed in it ſhould be, both by *Ariſtotle*'s precept, and common reaſon, but one day; there is both many days and many places, inartificially imagined.

But if it be ſo in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the reſt? where you ſhall have *Aſia* of the one ſide, and *Afric* of the other, and ſo many other under-kingdoms, that the player, when he comes in, muſt ever begin with telling where he is, or elſe the tale will not be conceived. Now, you ſhall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we muſt believe the ſtage to be a garden. By-and-by, we hear news of a ſhipwreck in the ſame place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that, comes out a hideous monſter with fire and ſmoke, and then the

miſerable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while, in the mean time, two armies fly in, repreſented with four ſwords and bucklers, and then, what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?

Now of time, they are much more liberal: for ordinary it is, that two young princes fall in love; after many traverſes, ſhe is got with child; delivered of a fair boy, he is loſt, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is ready to get another child; and all this in two hours ſpace: which, how abſurd it is in ſenſe, even ſenſe may imagine: and art hath taught, and all ancient examples juſtified, and at this day, the ordinary players in *Italy* will not err in it. Yet will ſome bring in an example of *Eunuch* in *Terence*, that containeth matter of two days, yet far ſhort of twenty years. True it is; and ſo was it to be played in two days, and ſo fitted to the time it ſet forth. And though *Plautus* have in one place done amiſs, let us hit it with him, and not miſs with him.

But they will ſay, how then ſhall we ſet forth a ſtory which contains both many places,

ces, and many times? And do they not know, that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poeſy, and not of hiſtory, not bound to follow the ſtory, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the hiſtory to the moſt tragical convenience? Again, many things may be told, which cannot be ſhewed; if they know the difference betwixt reporting and repreſenting. As for example, I may ſpeak, though I am here, of *Peru*, and in ſpeech digreſs from that, to the deſcription of *Calecut:* but in action, I cannot repreſent it, without *Pacolet*'s horſe. And ſo was the manner the ancients took by ſome *Nuntius*, to recount things done in former time, or other place.

Laſtly, If they will repreſent an hiſtory, they muſt not (as *Horace* ſaith) begin *above*, but they muſt come to the principal point of that one action which they will repreſent. By example this will be beſt expreſſed. I have a ſtory of young *Polydorus*, delivered, for ſafety's ſake, with great riches by his father *Priamus*, to *Polymneſtor* king of *Thrace*, in the *Trojan* war time. He, after

ſome years, hearing of the overthrow of *Priamus*, for to make the treaſure his own, murdered the child; the body of the child is taken up; *Hecuba*, ſhe, the ſame day, findeth a ſleight to be revenged moſt cruelly of the tyrant. Where, now, would one of our tragedy-writers begin, but with the delivery of the child? Then ſhould he ſail over into *Thrace*, and ſo ſpend I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth *Euripides?* Even with the finding of the body, leaving the reſt to be told by the ſpirit of *Polydorus*. This needs no farther to be enlarged; the dulleſt wit may conceive it.

But beſides theſe groſs abſurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies, nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not becauſe the matter ſo carrieth, but thruſt in the clown by head and ſhoulders to play a part in majeſtical matters, with neither decency nor diſcretion: ſo as neither the admiration and commiſeration, nor the right ſportfulneſs, is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. I know *Apuleius* did ſome-

what ſo, but that is a thing recounted with ſpace of time, not repreſented in one moment: and I know the antients have one or two examples of tragi-comedies, as *Plautus* hath *Amphytrio*. But if we mark them well we ſhall find, that they never, or very daintily, match horn-pipes and funerals. So falleth it out, that having, indeed, no right comedy in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but ſcurrility, unworthy of any chaſte ears, or ſome extream ſhew of doltiſhneſs, indeed, fit to lift up a loud laughter, and nothing elſe: where the whole tract of a comedy ſhould be full of delight, as the tragedy ſhould be ſtill maintained in a well raiſed admiration.

But our comedians think there is no delight without laughter, which is very wrong; for though laughter may come with delight, yet cometh it not of delight, as though delight ſhould be the cauſe of laughter; but well may one thing breed two together. Nay, in themſelves, they have, as it were, a kind of contrariety. For delight we ſcarcely do, but in things that have a convenien-

cy to ourſelves, or to the general nature. Laughter almoſt ever cometh of things moſt diſproportioned to ourſelves and nature: delight hath a joy in it either permanent or preſent: laughter hath only a ſcornful tickling. For example, we are raviſhed with delight to ſee a fair woman, and yet are far from being moved to laughter: we laugh at deformed creatures, wherein, certainly, we cannot delight: we delight in good chances; we laugh at miſchances: we delight to hear the happineſs of our friends and country; at which he were worthy to be laughed at, that would laugh: we ſhall, contrarily, ſometimes laugh to find a matter quite miſtaken, and go down the hill againſt the byaſs; in the mouth of ſome ſuch men, as for the reſpect of them, one ſhall be heartily ſorry, he cannot chuſe but laugh, and ſo is rather pained than delighted with laughter. Yet deny I not, but that they may go well together; for, as in *Alexander*'s picture well ſet out, we delight without laughter, and in twenty mad antics we laugh without delight; ſo in *Hercules*, paint-

ed with his great beard and furious countenance, in a woman's attire, ſpinning at *Omphale*'s commandment, it breeds both delight and laughter; for the repreſenting of ſo ſtrange a power in love, procures delight, and the ſcornfulneſs of the action ſtirreth laughter.

But I ſpeak to this purpoſe, that all the end of the comical part be not upon ſuch ſcornful matters as ſtir laughter only, but mix with it that delightful teaching, which is the end of *Poeſy*. And the great fault, even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainly by *Ariſtotle*, is, that they ſtir laughter in ſinful things, which are rather execrable than ridiculous; or in miſerable; which are rather to be pitied than ſcorned. For what is it to make folks gape at a wretched beggar, and a beggarly clown; or, againſt the law of hoſpitality, to jeſt at ſtrangers, becauſe they ſpeak not *Engliſh* ſo well as we do? What do we learn, ſince it is certain,

Nil habet infoelix paupertas durius in ſe,
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit?

but rather a buſy loving courtier, and a heartleſs threatning *Thraſo;* a ſelf-wiſe ſeeming ſchool-maſter; a wry-transformed traveller: theſe, if we ſaw walk in ſtage names, which we play naturally, therein were delightful laughter, and teaching delightfulneſs; as in the other, the tragedies of *Buchanan* do juſtly bring forth a divine admiration.

But I have laviſhed out too many words of this play-matter: I do it, becauſe, as they are excelling parts of *Poeſy*, ſo is there none ſo much uſed in *England*, and none can be more pitifully abuſed; which, like an unmannerly daughter, ſhewing a bad education, cauſeth her mother *Poeſy*'s honeſty to be called in queſtion.

Other ſort of *Poetry*, almoſt, have we none, but that *Lyrical* kind of ſongs and ſonnets, * which, if the Lord gave us ſo good minds, how well it might be employed, and with how heavenly fruits, both private and public, in ſinging the praiſes of the immortal beauty, the immortal goodneſs

* The PSALMS of DAVID.

of that God, who giveth us hands to write, and wits to conceive; of which we might well want words, but never matter; of which we could turn our eyes to nothing, but we ſhould ever have new budding occaſions.

But, truly, many of ſuch writings, as come under the banner of unreſiſtable love, if I were a miſtreſs, would never perſuade me they were in love; ſo coldly they apply fiery ſpeeches, as men that had rather read lovers writings, and ſo caught up certain ſwelling phraſes, which hang together, like a man that once told me, *the wind was at North-weſt and by South*, becauſe he would be ſure to name winds enough, than that, in truth, they feel thoſe paſſions, which eaſily, as I think, may be bewrayed by the ſame forcibleneſs or *energia* (as the *Greeks* call it) of the writer. But let this be a ſufficient, though ſhort note, that we miſs the right uſe of the material point of *Poeſy*.

Now for the outſide of it, which is words, or (as I may term it) *diction*, it is even well

worſe: ſo is that honey-flowing matron *Eloquence*, apparelled, or rather diſguiſed in a courtezan-like painted affectation. One time with ſo far-fetcht words that many ſeem monſters, but muſt ſeem ſtrangers to any poor *Engliſhman:* another time with courſing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a dictionary: another time with figures and flowers, extreamly winter-ſtarved.

But I would this fault were only peculiar to verſifiers, and had not as large poſſeſſion among proſe-printers: and, which is to be marvelled, among many ſcholars, and which is to be pitied, among ſome preachers. Truly, I could wiſh, if at leaſt I might be ſo bold to wiſh, in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity, the diligent imitators of *Tully* and *Demoſthenes*, moſt worthy to be imitated, did not ſo much keep *Nizolian* paper-books of their figures and phraſes, as by attentive tranſlation, as it were, devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For now they caſt ſugar and ſpice upon every diſh that is ſerved at the table: like thoſe *Indi-*

ans

ans, not content to wear ear-rings, at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thruſt jewels through their noſe and lips, becauſe they will be ſure to be fine. *Tully*, when he was to drive out *Catiline*, as it were with a thunderbolt of eloquence, often uſeth the figure of repetition, as *Vivit et vincit, imo in ſenatum venit, imo in ſenatum venit, etc.* Indeed inflamed with a well grounded rage, he would have his words (as it were) double out of his mouth, and ſo do that artificially, which we ſee men in choler do naturally. And we, having noted the grace of thoſe words, hale them in ſome times to a familiar epiſtle, when it were too much choler to be choleric.

How well, ſtore of *ſimiliter cadences* doth ſound with the gravity of the pulpit, I would but invoke *Demoſthenes*'s ſoul to tell, who with a rare daintineſs uſeth them. Truly, they have made me think of the *ſophiſter*, that with too much ſubtlety would prove two eggs three, and though he might be counted a *ſophiſter*, had none for his laour. So theſe men bringing in ſuch a kind

of eloquence, well may they obtain an opinion of a ſeeming fineneſs, but perſuade few, which ſhould be the end of their fineneſs.

Now for ſimilitude in certain printed diſcourſes, I think all herbaliſts, all ſtories of beaſts, fowls and fiſhes are rifled up, that they may come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as abſurd a ſurfeit to the ears as is poſſible. For the force of a ſimilitude not being to prove any thing to a contrary diſputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer, when that is done, the reſt is a moſt tedious pratling, rather overſwaying the memory from the purpoſe whereto they were applied, than any whit informing the judgment already either ſatisfied, or by ſimilitudes not to be ſatisfied.

For my part, I do not doubt, when *Antonius* and *Craſſus*, the great forefathers of *Cicero* in eloquence, the one (as *Cicero* teſtifieth of them) pretended not to know art, the other not to ſet by it, becauſe with a plain ſenſibleneſs they might win credit of popular ears, which credit is the neareſt

ſtep to perſuaſion (which perſuaſion is the chief mark of oratory;) I do not doubt, I ſay, but that they uſed theſe knacks very ſparingly; which who doth generally uſe, any man may ſee, doth dance to his own muſic, and ſo to be noted by the audience, more careful to ſpeak curiouſly than truly. Undoubtedly (at leaſt to my opinion undoubtedly) I have found in diverſe ſmall-learned courtiers a more ſound ſtile, than in ſome profeſſors of learning; of which I can gueſs no other cauſe, but that the courtier following that which by practice he findeth fitteſt to nature, therein (though he know it not) doth according to art, though not by art: where the other, uſing art to ſhew art, and not hide art (as in theſe caſes he ſhould do) flyeth from nature, and indeed abuſeth art.

But what? methinks I deſerve to be pounded for ſtraying from *Poetry* to *Oratory:* but both have ſuch an affinity in the wordiſh conſiderations, that I think this digreſſion will make my meaning receive the fuller underſtanding: which is not to take

upon me to teach *Poets* how they ſhould do, but only finding myſelf ſick among the reſt, to ſhew ſome one or two ſpots of the common infection grown among the moſt part of writers; that, acknowleging ourſelves ſomewhat awry, we may bend to the right uſe both of matter and manner: whereto our language giveth us great occaſion, being, indeed, capable of any excellent exerciſing of it. I know ſome will ſay, it is a mingled language: and why not ſo much the better, taking the beſt of both the other? Another will ſay, it wanteth grammar. Nay, truly, it hath that praiſe that it wants not grammar; for grammar it might have, but it needs it not, being ſo eaſy in itſelf, and ſo void of thoſe cumberſome difference of *caſes*, *genders*, *moods*, and *tenſes*, which, I think, was a piece of the tower of *Babylon*'s curſe, that a man ſhould be put to ſchool to learn his mother tongue. But for the uttering ſweetly and properly the conceit of the mind, which is the end of ſpeech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world, and is particularly hap-

py in compoſitions of two or three words together, near the *Greek*, far beyond the *Latin*, which is one of the greateſt beauties can be in a language.

Now of verſifying, there are two ſorts, the one *antient*, the other *modern*; the *antient* marked the quantity of each ſyllable, and according to that framed his verſe; the *modern*, obſerving only number, with ſome regard of the accent, the chief life of it ſtandeth in that like ſounding of the words, which we call rhime. Whether of thoſe be the more excellent, would bear many ſpeeches, the antient, no doubt, more fit for muſic, both words and time obſerving quantity, and more fit lively to expreſs diverſe paſſions by the low or lofty ſound of the well-weighed ſyllable. The latter likewiſe with his rhime ſtriketh a certain muſic to the ear; and, in fine, ſince it doth delight, though by another way, it obtaineth the ſame purpoſe, there being in either ſweetneſs, and wanting in neither majeſty. Truly, the *Engliſh*, before any vulgar language,

I know, is fit for both ſorts; for, for the antient, the *Italian* is ſo full of vowels, that it muſt ever be cumbred with *elyſions*. The *Dutch* ſo, of the other ſide, with conſonants, that they cannot yield the ſweet *ſliding* fit for a verſe. The *French*, in his whole language, hath not one word that hath his accent in the laſt ſyllable, ſaving two, called *antepenultima*; and little more hath the *Spaniſh*, and therefore very graceleſly may they uſe *dactiles*. The *Engliſh* is ſubject to none of theſe defects. Now for rhime, though we do not obſerve quantity, yet we obſerve the accent very preciſely, which other languages either cannot do, or will not do ſo abſolutely. That *caeſura*, or breathing-place, in the midſt of the verſe, neither *Italian* nor *Spaniſh* have, the *French* and we never almoſt fail of. Laſtly, even the very rhime itſelf the *Italian* cannot put it in the laſt ſyllable, by the *French* named the *maſculine* rhime, but ſtill in the next to the laſt, which the *French* call the *female*; or the next before that,

which the *Italian* call * *Sdrucciola:* the example of the former, is *buono*, *ſuono*; of the *Sdrucciola*, is *femina*, *ſemina*. The *French*, of the other ſide, hath both the *male*, as *bon*, *ſon*, and the *female*, as *plaiſe*, *taiſe*; but the *Sdrucciola* he hath not: where the *Engliſh* hath all three, as *due*, *true*, *father*, *rather*, *motion*, *potion*, with much more which might be ſaid, but that already I find the triflings of this diſcourſe is much too much inlarged.

So that ſince the ever praiſe-worthy *Poeſy* is full of virtue, breeding delightfulneſs, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning; ſince the blames laid againſt it are either falſe or feeble; ſince the cauſe why it is not eſteemed in *England*, is the fault of poet-apes, not Poets: ſince, laſtly, our tongue is moſt fit to honour *Poeſy*, and to be honoured by *Poeſy*; I conjure you all that have had the evil luck

* *i. e.* The eaſy *ſliding* of words of three, or more, ſyllables.

to read this ink-waſting toy of mine, even in the name of the nine *Muſes*, no more to ſcorn the ſacred myſteries of *Poeſy*: no more to laugh at the name of *Poets*, as though they were next inheritors to fools; no more to jeſt at the reverend title of a rhymer, but to believe, with *Ariſtotle*, that they were the ancient treaſures of the *Grecians* divinity; to believe, with *Bembus*, that they were firſt bringers in of all civility; to believe, with *Scaliger*, that no *Philoſopher*'s precepts can ſooner make you an honeſt man, than the reading of *Virgil*; to believe, with *Clauſerus*, the tranſlator of *Cornutus*, that it pleaſed the heavenly deity by *Heſiod* and *Homer* under the vail of fables, to give us all knowlege, *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, *Philoſophy* natural and moral, and *quid non?* To believe, with me, that there are many myſteries contained in *Poetry*, which of purpoſe were written darkly, leſt by profane wits it ſhould be abuſed: to believe, with *Landin*, that they are ſo beloved of the gods, that whatſoever they write, proceeds of a divine fury. Laſtly,

ly, to believe themſelves, when they tell you, they will make you immortal by their verſes.

Thus doing, your names ſhall flouriſh in the printers ſhops: thus doing, you ſhall be of kin to many a poetical preface: thus doing, you ſhall be moſt fair, moſt rich, moſt wiſe, moſt all; you ſhall dwell upon ſuperlatives: thus doing, though you be *libertino patre natus*, you ſhall ſuddenly grow *Herculea proles*,

Si quid mea Carmina poſſunt.

Thus doing, your ſoul ſhall be placed with *Dante*'s *Beatrix*, or *Virgil*'s *Anchiſes*.

But if (fie of ſuch a *but!*) you be born ſo near the dull-making *Cataract* of *Nilus*, that you cannot hear the planet-like muſic of *Poetry*; if you have ſo earth-creeping a mind, that it cannot lift itſelf up to look to the ſky of *Poetry*, or rather, by a certain ruſtical diſdain, will become ſuch a mome, as to be a *Momus* of *Poetry*: then, though I

will not wiſh unto you the aſs's ears of *Midas*, nor to be driven by a *Poet*'s verſes as *Bubonax* was, to hang himſelf, not to be rhymed to death, as is ſaid to be done in *Ireland*; yet thus much curſe I muſt lend you in the behalf of all *Poets*, that while you live, you live in love, and never get favour, for lacking ſkill of a ſonnet; and when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph.

THE END.

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FROM

Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's MISCELLANIES.

ESSAY UPON POETRY.

THE true ſpirit or vein of ancient poetry, in this kind, ſeems to ſhine moſt in Sir PHILIP SIDNEY, whom I eſteem both the greateſt poet and the nobleſt genius of any that have left writings behind them, and publiſhed in ours or any other modern language; a perſon born capable not only of forming the greateſt ideas, but of leaving the nobleſt examples, if the length of his life had been equal to the excellence of his wit and virtues.

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